

I remember the debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have had that debate. I regret that it did not result in the passing of the act, but one of the reasons it did not result in the passing of the act was because of blocking efforts on the part of the Democrats to a Republican proposal that would have given States, on an experimental basis, the opportunity to try something new. There was no dictating in the position of the Senator from Washington, Mr. GORTON, that said States have to try this. His amendment said if a State thinks the present system is wonderful, the State can continue to receive money with the present system. They can continue to accept those 60 percent of the strings. They can continue to do exactly what they are doing.

What if a State does not want to do it quite that way? What if a State wants to experiment in a very tentative fashion with something new? Let's give them the opportunity to try it. The senior Senator from Massachusetts was one of the first to take the floor and roar that we must not allow that kind of experimentation. We must not allow anyone to try anything different.

Look at the States that are making progress. And, yes, look at the State of Texas. Look at the progress that has been made among Hispanic students, the progress that has been made among black students—the progress that has been made among minorities generally in the State of Texas. It leads the national average. It is a record of extremely beneficial accomplishment, and it is taking place in the early grades where it needs to take place because if you wait until the time they get to the SAT scores, it is too late.

If you want to look at SAT scores, you are looking at high school students, and the high school students in Texas were cheated by the administrations in Texas that were there prior to the time Governor Bush took over. It is in the lower grades where they are seeing the fruits of the activities in Texas where they are trusting people, trusting the locals, giving the opportunities that need to be given to those who need education the most.

The white middle-class suburban kids do pretty well in this country in almost every State in which they live. The real educational crisis is among the minorities. The real educational crisis is among those people who live in the inner cities and do not have the opportunities that come to the white middle-class suburban kids. Let's be honest and straightforward about that.

It is very interesting. Who has led the fight, which seems to upset the senior Senator from Massachusetts more than any other, for experimentation with vouchers? It has been Polly Williams, an inner-city representative of a minority, a black member of the State legislature. She comes from Milwaukee, and she has led the fight not for the rich, not for the upper 1 per-

cent, not for the other groups that have been demonized in this political campaign. She has led the fight for poor inner-city kids. She has won the fight, and the fight in Milwaukee is over. If you run for an educational position in Milwaukee now, you better be for vouchers because the public has seen it and has embraced it, and it is now the strong majority position.

It comes down to this fundamental question when we talk about money: Do you want to fund the individual or do you want to fund the system? We say let's fund the individual and let the individual take the money wherever he wants to go. They say: Oh, no; that's terrible. He might take it to a—dare we say it?—religious school. He might take the money in such a way that violates the separation of church and State. We can't have that.

In what is considered the most successful social program since the Second World War, we did exactly that. We gave the money to individuals, and we said to them: We don't care what you do with it; just use it to get an education. I am talking, of course, about the GI bill. When we said to the GIs who came home from World War II, "We are going to give you money to go to school," we did not say, "We are going to pick the institutions that will receive this money and then you go petition for it." We just said if they served in the Armed Forces, they have the money under the GI bill of rights. And if they wanted to go to Notre Dame and study to be a Catholic priest, they could do that and nobody was going to claim that was somehow a violation of the separation of church and State.

We said if they want to take the money and go to Oral Roberts University, they could do that. It may well be Oral Roberts University did not exist under the GI bill—I am not sure—but the principle still holds. If they wanted to go to Harvard, if they wanted to go to Wellesley, if they wanted to go to Ohio State University, or if they wanted to go to Baylor or Southern Methodist—they pick the school and the money follows the individual, giving the individual power, and America is the better for it. That is what we are talking about here. The money should go where it will do the individual the most good and not be controlled out of Washington that puts up 6 cents out of every educational dollar and then wants to make 60 percent of every educational decision.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 p.m. having arrived, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:17 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now begin consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4635, the VA-HUD appropriations bill, notwithstanding the receipt of the papers, and it be considered as having been read and the conference report be considered under the following agreement: 30 minutes under the control of Senator GRAHAM of Florida, 10 minutes equally divided between Senators BOND and MIKULSKI, 20 minutes equally divided between Senators DOMENICI and REID, and 10 minutes equally divided between Senators STEVENS and BYRD. I further ask consent that at the conclusion or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report without any intervening action, motion, or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senate proceeded to consider the conference report.

(The report was printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 18, 2000.)

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, for the information of all Members, let me point out that at the request of the leadership on both sides of the aisle, we are moving forward and hope to have a vote, certainly no later than 3:30 this afternoon, because we do need to get this measure passed, as well as several others.

I will take just a few minutes of my time now. I am pleased to present to the Senate the conference report to H.R. 4635, the VA-HUD appropriations bill for fiscal year 2001. As I indicated previously, this has been a very unusual year. The conference report represents the compromise agreement reached with Senator MIKULSKI, Congressman WALSH, Congressman MOLLOHAN, and myself, in consultation with the administration.

Certainly it is not a perfect situation. It is not the way I would like to do the bill. I would prefer to proceed